

## Interview With Mrs. Williams, Norfolk, Virginia, ca 1937-1940

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### Interview With Mrs. Williams, Norfolk, Virginia, ca 1937-1940

Mrs. Williams: I think God's going, how many more angels is out there? Kill me now!

Roscoe Lewis: Who was that overseer, what was his name?

Mrs. Williams: I say you done whup me nearly to death. I tell you ain't whupped me, you ain't whupped salvation out of me; ain't even whupped grace out of me. And I been born to God. I said, "Now kill me!" I said, "Glory to God's children." But he kept on ??? . Drag me over to ??? . That's why I kept my ??? . God give me a ??? .

Roscoe Lewis: What did that white man do to that old [slave (?)]? Tell us about that.

Mrs. Williams: The overseer?

Roscoe Lewis: Yeah, that old overseer, tell us about that.

Mrs. Williams: The old overseer, and I was, the children, my old master left back behind. He did us so nice he ??? because we was just like brothers and sisters to the white kids, was. We always worked together. One went barefooted. He make you farm. We went barefooted. And [indeed (?)] if they can put on their shoes, work shoes, like that, and halfway, we put on ours. And when we, if they pulled off theirs, we pulled off ours. We were just laying, just ??? .

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: [*speaks incomprehensibly across Mrs. Williams*]

Mrs. Williams: And my old Mrs. [Scholton (?)] sometime ??? . Say, "I leave you more ??? the better you do me. Yes, I do. For my niggas and my money." And I was going ??? my niggas with ??? [lot's of money (?)]. And said to me, "When I die and go on to Washington," he said, "Put them to ??? . "And then the youngest girl had to be married before she could have her [plantation (?)]. When I sat on her [line (?)] and carry me up on New Year's day, put me on the block, and she hide. I looked to her, I say, "I don't a fool what that man behind me." I said, "She [done ??? me folks (?)]." I, I said, "She done market me just selling my own folks back in slavery." I wonder how he got, [*cough*] that white man had five plantations. And ??? that plantation ??? [kennels (?)] everything: cows, work cows, dairy, work cows ??? everything God could wish for was in there. In that plantation. I [be in the rain soaked (?)]. [*cough*] Just how slavery be. That's was slavery. Bought me. Carried me away from hell to heaven.

And ??? me to ??? , like I was raised. I don't raised no always been take care of her. I knew I always on my eighty years and I know how you ??? it. But I was raised ??? . And the—

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: Go on and tell them bout the ??? . Killed the slave ladies.

Mrs. Williams: And, oh, to the ??? time. When we was chi—

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: Tell them bout the ??? .

Roscoe Lewis: That's all right. Go ahead. Go on. That's all right.

Mrs. Williams: And when, when we ??? we, we, we, ??? about to dig a hole that deep. And we got in good with the, with the ??? . ??? .

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: ??? .

Mrs. Williams: And, and, and put straw to pour tar down in there. And then stick a leg and send it down her leg.

Roscoe Lewis: What did he do about it?

Mrs. Williams: Nothing. [That was only for ??? Tom Colby (?)].

Roscoe Lewis: What do you mean?

Mrs. Williams: [Tom Colby (?)].

Roscoe Lewis: Well, now what did you—

Mrs. Williams: He mean ??? and these young girls and boys ??? was ??? and haul picking cotton for them. And see all like that would go on. ??? cotton. ??? Our people. ??? [recording noise] ??? in church. ??? And they put that one man and they chained him down. Chained him down with a chain. They ??? a ??? chain. ???

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: ???

Mrs. Williams: The line from here to that ??? . *Do You Praise God?*

Unidentified Woman: *Praise God ??? .*

Mrs. Williams: Do you praise God all the time?

Roscoe Lewis: Would you sing that song you sang Mrs. Williams?

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: Sing the song you [learned (?)].

Mrs. Williams: [*sings*]

Do you praise God in the [corn field (?)]? Do you praise God when you was digging corn? Do you praise God when he [was coming back (?)]? ??? . Do you praise God when you was singing now?

Unidentified Woman Interviewer: Sing how you sang that song. ??? . Sing that song.

[*the women seem to hold a discussion among themselves*]

Mrs. Williams: ??? I'm telling you the ??? .

Roscoe Lewis: Bless you.

Mrs. Williams: ??? I'll show you. And see I'll tell you how to preach ??? to ??? . ??? And the lady in the store ??? and he ??? after ??? he preached. ??? And when you have God in your ??? all my God. ??? . [*cough*] I know someone would help me die right. [*Mrs. Williams sings*] God is ??? of God my ??? [*recording ends*]

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